GHOST RIDER

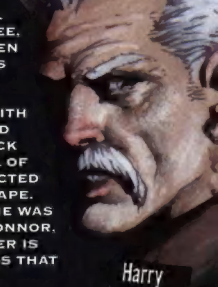
MOTORCYCLE STUNTMAN JOHNNY BLAZE HAS ALWAYS HAD HIS HEART IN THE RIGHT PLACE... AND MADE ALL THE WRONG DECISIONS. A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL CURSED HIM INTO BECOMING THE GHOST RIDER, A SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE WHO HUNTS DOWN THE GUILTY AND DISPENSES BLOODY RETRIBUTION.

NOW HE'S GONE AND DONE IT AGAIN.

TRAPPED IN HELL AFTER BEING MANIPULATED BY ANGELS AND DEMONS ALIKE, JOHNNY MADE A BARGAIN TO ESCAPE AND INADVERTENTLY FREED LUCIFER, THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS.

DURING THE PASSAGE TO THE PHYSICAL WORLD, LUCIFER'S BODY SCATTERED INTO 666 PIECES, EACH OF WHICH POSSESSED A RECENTLY DECEASED CORPSE. EACH POSSESSED VICTIM ALLOWS LUCIFER TO WREAK HAVOC ACROSS THE GLOBE SIMULTANEOUSLY—TO KILL, TO MAIM, TO TORTURE.

IT HAS BEEN THE GHOST RIDER'S MISSION TO HUNT DOWN AND DESTROY EVERY LAST VESTIGE OF LUCIFER, AND THAT PURPOSE HAS BROUGHT HIM TO SLEEPY HOLLOW, ILLINOIS. IN THIS QUAINT MIDWESTERN TOWN, LUCIFER'S SPIRIT HAS FOUND A WILLING HOST IN THE CORPSE OF JACK O'LANTERN, A SUPER-VILLAIN KILLED DURING THE CIVIL WAR. EMBARKING ON A MASS KILLING SPREE, LUCIFER TARGETED THE LOCAL CHILDREN AND LEFT THEIR HEADLESS CORPSES SCATTERED ACROSS TOWN.



IN GHOST RIDER'S FIRST FIGHT WITH HIM, THE AVATAR'S INCREASED POWERS, COMBINED WITH JACK O'LANTERN'S HIDDEN ARSENAL OF GADGETS AND WEAPONS, DISTRACTED THE RIDER LONG ENOUGH TO ESCAPE. WHEN THE GHOST RIDER PURSUED, HE WAS INTERCEPTED BY SHERIFF HARRY O'CONNOR, WHO IS CONVINCED THAT GHOST RIDER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SERIAL KILLINGS THAT HAVE TERRORIZED HIS TOWN.

MEANWHILE, LUCIFER RETURNED TO THE CEMETERY WHERE HE FIRST CLAIMED JACK O'LANTERN'S CORPSE. HE HAS CALLED ON A FEW FRIENDS TO HELP HIM MAKE THIS HALLOWEEN THE MOST FRIGHTENING EVER...

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The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, Illinois
PART 3
CHK-CHAKK!
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DAN BROWN
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K-SSHHH!
HRNGHH...
WUFF-
BWOOOOOOOMMMM!

SON OF A...
MY CAR...
THE FLAMES...
DID HE SAVE ME ON PURPOSE?
OR...?
RALPH, IT'S HARRY.
WE GOT A FIRE DOWN HERE AT KIMBALL DRUG ON FIRST AND--
RALPH?
ON SECOND THOUGHT, DO NOT SEND THE FIRE TRUCKS DOWN HERE RIGHT NOW.

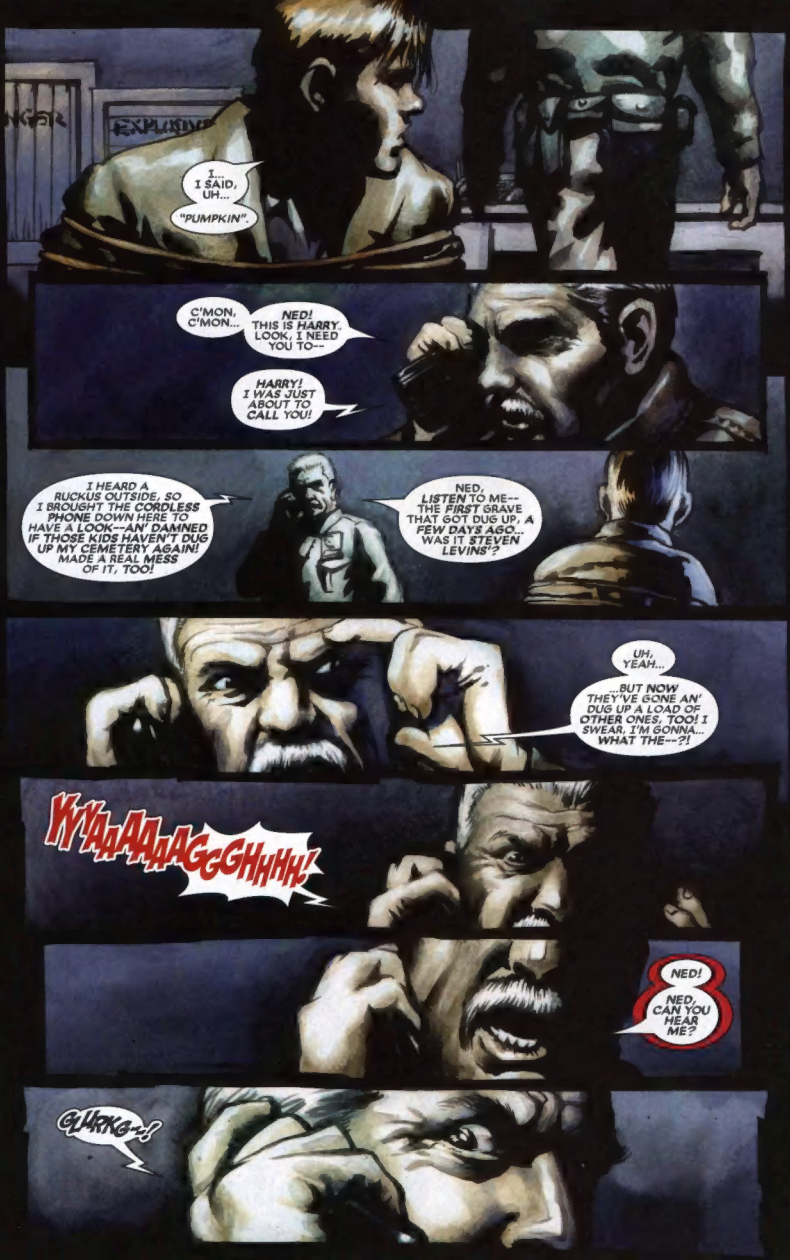
WHAT... HARRY?
WHY SHOULDN'T I SEND THE TRUCKS?

WANTED TO FINISH ME OFF YOURSELF, HUH?
IS THAT IT?
WELL, COME ON!
BUT I AIN'T GOIN' WITHOUT A--
FWUMP!
FIGHT...?

"OPEN YOUR EYES!"
WH-WHERE...?
YOU'RE IN MY BASEMENT.
AND IF YOU TRY TURNIN' INTO THAT...FLAMING SKELETON THING, KNOW THIS:
CAPTAIN
NO SMOKING

I DON'T CARE WHO YOU ARE...
...I JUST WANNA KNOW WHAT YOU ARE.
AND WHY YOU'RE HERE.
I'M...
...MY NAME'S JOHNNY BLAZE AN'-- A LONG TIME AGO-- I MADE A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL TO SAVE THE ONES I LOVE.
BECAUSE OF THAT DEAL, I BECAME SOMETHING CALLED THE GHOST RIDER...AN' THEN I GOT SENT TO HELL.
BUT I ESCAPED... AN' SO DID THE DEVIL.
NOT IN ONE PIECE LIKE ME, THOUGH. INSTEAD, HE CAME HERE TO EARTH IN A BUNCH OF LITTLE PIECES THAT ENDED UP IN THE BODIES OF THE RECENTLY-DEAD, BRINGING 'EM BACK TO LIFE...BUT POSSESSED.
YOU ASKED ME WHAT I'M DOIN' HERE, WELL...
...I'M CHASIN' AFTER THE DEVIL, TRYIN' TO RIGHT SOMETHIN' THAT I DID VERY, VERY WRONG.
ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?

A COUPLE...
YOU'RE CONVINCED THAT THE DEVIL IS HERE, IN SLEEPY HOLLOW?
I KNOW HE IS.
HMM...
WHAT'S THE DEVIL LOOK LIKE, ANYWAY?
YEAH, OKAY--I SEE WHERE THIS IS GOING.
NO, I'M SERIOUS, "JOHNNY". I REALLY WANNA KNOW.
I...I DON'T KNOW.
WHEN THE GHOST RIDER'S IN CONTROL, I--
WAIT...
A PUMPKIN.
AN'...AN' FIRE.
...WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?


EXPLOSIVES
I... I SAID, UH... "PUMPKIN".
C'MON, C'MON...
NED! THIS IS HARRY. LOOK, I NEED YOU TO--
HARRY! I WAS JUST ABOUT TO CALL YOU!
I HEARD A RUCKUS OUTSIDE, SO I BROUGHT THE CORDLESS PHONE DOWN HERE TO HAVE A LOOK--AN' DAMNED IF THOSE KIDS HAVEN'T DUG UP MY CEMETERY AGAIN! MADE A REAL MESS OF IT, TOO!
NED, LISTEN TO ME-- THE FIRST GRAVE THAT GOT DUG UP, A FEW DAYS AGO... WAS IT STEVEN LEVINS'?
UH, YEAH...
...BUT NOW THEY'VE GONE AN' DUG UP A LOAD OF OTHER ONES, TOO! I SWEAR, I'M GONNA... WHAT THE--?!
WYAAAAAAAGGGHHHH!
NED!
NED, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
GURK--!

UH...WHO'S "STEVEN LEVINS"?
STEVEN LEVINS IS--WAS--A LOCAL BOY [illegible] BAD...HE LEFT TOWN AND MOVED TO [illegible] YORK, WHERE HE DECIDED TO GET RICH QUICK [illegible] PUTTIN' ON A COSTUME AN' KILLIN' PEOPLE FOR MONEY.
WENT BY THE NAME JACK [illegible] HE DIED RECENTLY--GOT [illegible] BLOWN OFF BY THAT VIGILANTE, THE [illegible]
SO, PUTTIN' TWO [illegible] TWO TOGETHER...
[illegible] ON--YOU ACTUALLY BELIEVE ME?!
ANYWAY, HIS PARENTS HAD HIS BODY SHIPPED HERE FOR BURIAL...BUT HE'S NOT BURIED ANYMORE.
AN' [illegible] MATCHES THE [illegible] OF SOMEBODY WHO'S KILLING CHILDREN IN MY TOWN.
KID, I'VE BEEN [illegible] OFFICER OF THE LAW FOR A LONG TIME. [illegible] THAT, I WENT TO WAR...
...TWICE.
SUFFICE IT TO SAY, NOTHIN' [illegible] ANYMORE.
NOW, LOOKIN' AROUND THE [illegible] PLACE, IT SHOULD BE PRETTY OBVIOUS THAT I DON'T HAVE MUCH FAITH [illegible] HUMANITY...BUT I DO [illegible] FAITH.
IF YOU SAY YOU'RE AFTER THE DEVIL, I SAY I'VE GOT ONE THAT JUST POPPED OUTTA THE GROUND. [illegible] YOU'RE FOR REAL, THEN IT'S [illegible] REAL.
SO LET'S GO KILL IT.

THIS LEVINS GUY--HE WAS [redacted] OF THOSE SUPER-PEOPLE? A, UH... SUPER-VILLAIN?
NO.
HE WAS JUST A DINGLEBERRY IN [redacted] SUIT OF BODY [redacted]
BUT I CAN TAKE CARE OF THAT.
THEN IT'LL BE [redacted] TO YOU--THE PART [redacted] YOU THAT'S [redacted] FIRE--TO TAKE OUT WHAT'S [redacted] THE [redacted]
[redacted] HIM? NO, WAIT-- HOW [redacted] WE [redacted] HIM?
I DUNNO...
C'MON, KID-- THINK!
HE...HE GETS OFF ON PAIN, Y'KNOW?
HE LIKES TO RUIN PEOPLE, TEAR 'EM DOWN...
...DEFILE THEIR BELIEFS.
GOT IT.

H-HARRY...?
WHAT'S--
THE DEVIL'S COMING, DARRYL-- HE'S COMING HERE, TO YOUR HOUSE. YOU SHOULD PACK UP THE WIFE AND KIDS AND GET OUTTA TOWN.
YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M SAYING, DARRYL?
THE END TIMES HAVE COME.
REPENT
JUST LIKE YOU ALWAYS SAID THEY WOULD.

BOOMM!
SHOULD'A BROUGHT THE M-60 FOR THIS...
CHK-CHAKK!
BOOMM!
THE CORPSES ARE NOTHIN' TO WORRY ABOUT-- THEY'RE USELESS WITHOUT ORDERS!
UH... YEAH?
I THINK I ALREADY KNEW THAT...

GHOST WRITERS

Is it hot in here or is it just me? Maybe it's just all the burning passion I'm feeling from my fellow Riders this month: sizzling fan art, explosive shout-outs from across the world, and enthusiasm that could burn a hole through even Ghosty's bike. Or it could just be that the air conditioning system doesn't work in this office... Regardless, I'm handling these letters with my oven mitts on.

Hey guys,

I am so glad that Johnny Blaze is back as Ghost Rider and you guys are doing a killer job so far. Everything has been perfection and I hope this book has a long run.

A few guests I'd like to see are Moon Knight, Daimon Hellstrom, Werewolf by Night (whatever happened to Jack Russell?), Spider-Woman, and maybe Morbius if he's still around.

I'd really like to see Ghost Rider incorporated into the Marvel mainstream and not just his own world. But, of course, it's still gotta stay supernatural. Fighting bikers and low-level demons could get old quick.

Chuck
Long Beach, CA

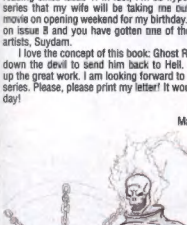
Hey, Chuck! You want the Marvel mainstream? Lucky for you, you're in the midst of our rockin' Jack O'Lantern arc, and just wait until issues #12 and #13, when the Hulk comes aboard for a special two-part slugfest!

Dear Ghost Writers,

I have enjoyed this series very much and have been reading since issue 1. In fact, I'm so hyped about this series that my wife will be taking me out to see the movie on opening weekend for my birthday. We are now on issue 8 and you have gotten one of the best cover artists, Suydam.

I love the concept of this book: Ghost Rider hunting down the devil to send him back to Hell. Please keep up the great work. I am looking forward to more of this series. Please, please print my letter! It would make my day!

Derek Davis
Marshville, NC



Derek, you'd better believe we're gonna print your letter when you include a drawing of an Old School GR, disco collar and all! And thanks for pointing out our awesome cover artist, Arthur Suydam, whose twisted *Marvel Zombie* work convinced us he had just the right combination of humor and horror to tackle the Flamehead.

To the Ghost Writers,

Hi, I would like to start out by saying, "awesome job!" I never really liked comics before, and I have to thank Ghost Rider for changing my mind. I haven't been a Flamehead since the comic came out or anything—actually, I had never read a Ghost Rider book before issue #3 of this new series—but I fell in love with it as soon as I started reading. I have the latest issue (#8) and I can't wait for #9 (The Headless Horseman is my favorite supernatural creature). And I'm going to try to get that CD with the 200 GR comics on it, including a lot of the original stuff. In the meantime, I'm also checking out *Trail of Tears*. It's different, but it's certainly got me interested to find out what's happening next.

I'm sad to say I still haven't been able to find the first two issues of this new series, but thanks to the recap page, I was able to understand what was going on.

Well, I hope you guys have a long run on the new series and I can't wait for the movie to come out on Friday (I want to take my dad to see it opening night for his birthday). And to all the people who have been a Flamehead for a long time or, like me, a short time: ROCK ON, FLAMEHEADS!!!!!!!!!!!

Tyler Dugan

Tyler, there's no shame in being a new Rider. While you've got a lot of catching up to do, those flaming training wheels will come off in no time. Check out ESSENTIAL GHOST RIDER volumes 1 and 2 for a great start on Johnny Blaze's original adventures and your local comic book shop, eBay, or a comic convention for issues #1 and #2 of the current series.

Ghost Writers--

Keep up the great work on this @#)@*# awesome comic! Ghost Rider Lives! Ghost Rider Rules! Ghost Rider Conquers! And Ghost Rider is Cool! Bless all ya'll at Marvel for bringing back this sick *#$%(#$* Johnny Blaze and the Ghost Rider. Goodnight and God Bless!

Easy Eric S.

Easy Eric, it's always a pleasure to hear from you, sir! Glad you're enjoying the ride!

Flameheads,

I love the work you guys are doing on the new series. Being rather poor, I've been an on-and-off Spider-Man collector for a while. I only became aware of Ghost Rider through an episode of the Fantastic Four animated series where he rode in and turned Galactus into a vegetarian and through an issue of the original Johnny Blaze series where he and Zarathos were separated in Mephisto's realm.

Since starting college, I bought volume one of the ESSENTIAL GHOST RIDER and have been collecting the new series. Oddly enough, I found the new series when I went into a comic store on the off chance that there *was* a new Ghost Rider series. I love psychic intuition.

Marvel has always fascinated me, because their characters always seem richer and more realistic, but this new series has just completely blown me away. Way's storyline is great, and I love Satan's one liners. And Mark Texeira is one of the greatest artists I've seen in my life. I was actually somewhat disappointed when Richard Corben came in for the "Hell To Pay" arc, but I remain a devoted and loyal fan of old Flamehead anyway.

Satan ripping off GR's leg gave me an idea for the Hellfire Garage which I have sent along. My friends and I were given a bunch of old wheelchairs that a hospital was throwing away and we plan to make a version of the GR trailer based around my picture.

Keep up the fantastic work, and until all Hellfire is quenched, make mine Marvel.

Stephen Cullen,
UCD, Ireland.

Brilliant addition to the garage, Stephen! But I have to ask... would the wheelchair-bound GR still have to drive on the left side of the road over there?

Hey Flameheads,

We are two friends from glorious Greece. We randomly picked up the first issue of the new ongoing series, mainly because of the really cool cover, and we were immediately captured by the book! We have every single issue since. Not only the cover art, but also the interior art was just incredible! No need to mention Mr. Way's astonishing writing skills! Tex and Jarv are, in our opinion, two of the only three artists* that can capture and deliver the dark essence and hellish atmosphere of the Spirit of Vengeance's world. And when the Devil's plan was revealed in issue #4, we had our jaws dropped to the floor, thanks to Mr. Way. We may not be the number one fans like some of the hardcore fans from the letters page, but we are completely passionate nonetheless. Keep up the amazing work! And make ours Marvel!

John and Chris
Greece

*P.S.: The third artist is the brilliant Clayton Crain and we are looking forward to Garth's new (and hopefully best) Ghost Rider miniseries!

Just when I thought it couldn't get any hotter in here, John and Chris had to bring the Greece lightning! Thanks a lot for writing in, guys, and hold onto your jaws!

Hey Michael, the GR staff and all you Flameheads out there!

My name is Audrey Daignault-Viens, and I wanted to tell you how I became a huge GR fan!

First of all, I'm a girl (Hey, what do you know? You're right! You got a fe-mail! Ha.) I'm 14, and I live in Quebec, Canada and yes, I'm very proud of being French! Well, my story on how I got to know Ghost Rider is really quite funny.

It all started on December 22, 2006. We rented *Talladega Nights*, and while my mom went to get snacks, I checked out the first preview; it was for some movie called GHOST RIDER. I was like, "Ghost Rider. What's Ghost Rider?" so I pressed play and from that moment on, I....Simply...Got.... HOOKED!!! After watching it once, I was overwhelmed, and all kinds of thoughts and emotions went through my head. WHO WAS THIS GHOST RIDER? WHERE DID HE COME FROM? It all just overwhelmed me! All I could think about was his blazing skull and his Hellfire Chain. I just sat there mystified with that flaming skull and then watched the preview over and over again.

Later that night, I went to the movie's official site and immediately got addicted. When I went to Marvel.Com and learned that it was a comic book too, I hunted down the Ghost Rider publishing catalogue and found out that there was a comic book store in Montreal, about thirty minutes away from my house. Every weekend since, I go there to purchase my comic books.

Even though I'm new to the Ghost Rider, I've already learned a lot about him from the book GHOST RIDER: THE VISUAL GUIDE. Although, I am confused by two things: First of all, why does the Ghost Rider weigh more than Johnny Blaze? (Or Danny Ketch?) I thought the Flamehead was just bone and Hellfire!

And secondly, will it take another 2 years to publish the ESSENTIAL GHOST RIDER volumes?

Anyways, thanks so much for your time!

Audrey Daignault-Viens
QC, Canada

Another converted Flamehead! As for your questions, Audrey, remember that Ghost Rider's bones have to be denser (and thus heavier) than Johnny's or Danny's to defend himself against physical attacks that would kill a normal human being and also to grant the Rider his enhanced strength. As for GR trades, I'm sure that with the movie coming to DVD soon, you can expect more Ghosty in your local comics shop to coincide with it.

Now, I couldn't help but notice that Ricky Bobby was responsible for your love of the Rider, and that leads me to this month's Burning Question: who would win in a race between Ghosty and Ricky? Could even the Spirit of Vengeance outmaneuver the technical ingenuity of a perfectly executed Shake and Bake?

And speaking of baking, if I don't stop this letter column now, I'm going to spontaneously combust. It's time for me to grab a cold one and dip next month's letters in a bucket of ice to cool them down a little.

--Michael

ADAM ROSENLUND
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